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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0327

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3423

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1241

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RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

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RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC

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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2256

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000266

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL FAIR MARR AMED TX

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: AGREEMENT REACHED ON PROCEDURES
FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL FLIGHT CLEARANCE

REF: A. 07 ASHGABAT 1255

¶B. 07 ASHGABAT 1281

¶C. 07 ASHGABAT 1303

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) MFA and Embassy officials agreed February 21 on a procedure for expeditiously approving landing clearances for civilian emergency medical flights contracted by the Embassy.

This new procedure, which entails faxing the request and confirming receipt by phone, should ensure a two-hour turnaround for all requests of this type. In addition, MFA Consular officials promised that each request would be approved and provided the Embassy with two functioning duty phone numbers that are answered 24-hours/day.

¶3. (SBU) When Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov informed the Embassy on November 26, 2007, that the Government of Turkmenistan agreed to renew annual blanket overflight and landing clearance for OEF-related flights (request number 999C), he confirmed that it would not do the same for civilian emergency medical flights (Refs. A and B). Requests by the Embassy for landing clearance for SOS International emergency medical flights henceforth would be handled on a case-by-case basis. Meredov agreed, however, that MFA would respond to requests within a few hours rather than within 24 hours as the Turkmenistan government had originally proposed.

¶4. (SBU) Nevertheless, this still left us concerned because DAO has had problems contacting officials at MFA to deal with military clearance issues on weekends or late at night. Therefore, the Embassy sought a meeting with MFA Consular Affairs officials (who are responsible for approving international landing clearances) to nail down a procedure that would guarantee rapid approval regardless of time or day of the week.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: Although post's use of emergency medical flights has been rare, it is crucial that we be able to

rapidly bring in medevac flights, if the need arises.
Blanket clearance provided that level of assurance, and the
new procedure should as well. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND